[English]

Cellular Services in the Country

3007. PROF. P.J. KURIEN :
SHRI S.D.N.R. WADIYAR :
SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the steps taken for starting of inter-connected All-India Cellular Services in the country;

(b) if so, details thereof;

(c) whether private operators are involved in connecting the cellular sysem to All India Telecom System; and

(d) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) and (b). Cellular Service is at present operational in the four metro cities of Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. The cellular networks are connected with the public telephone network of Deptt. of Telecom. providing nationwide and international access. Cellular network in Telecom Circles will also be connected to public telephone network as and when they are operational.

(c) The Cellular networks are connected to the public telephone network of DoT through Interconnect Links. Provision of interconnect links is the responsibility of the Cellular operators.

(d) Does not arise in view of (a), (b) & (c).

State Run Airlines Dying Species

3008. SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV :
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY :

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "State-run airlines: A dying species" appearing in the Economic Times, New Delhi dated October 23, 1996;

(b) if so, the details thereof and reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) whether huge accummulated debts and substandard losses are some of the major symptoms of loss making state owned airlines; and

(d) if so, the steps being considered by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) to (c). The newsitem states that huge accumulated debts, substantial losses, strong unions, over-politicisation etc. are symptoms of loss making state owned airlines all over the world.

Air India incurred a loss of Rs. 271.84 crores for the first time during 1995-96 due to increase in expenditure on account of interest and depreciation on new aircraft, reduction in yield due to increased competition, increased landing, handling and navigational charges, agitation by engineers, etc.

Indian Airlines has been incurring losses since 1989-90 due to grounding of A320 fleet, entry of private airlines on trunk routes, exodus of pilots etc.

(d) To improve their financial performance, Air India and Indian Airlines are taking steps to intensify their marketing efforts, augment capacity, reduce non-operating costs and to improve their product, image and on time performance.

[Translation]

Wages to Workers of ITC, Monghyr

3009. SHRI BRAHAMANAND MANDAL : Will the Minister of LABOUR be plased to state :

(a) whether the Indian Tobacco Company Limited in Monghyr pays the minimum wages to about 250 workers (who are known as park workers);

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) to (c). The information is being collected and the same will be laid on the Table of the House.

[English]

Films and Television Institutes

3010. KUMARI SUSHILA TIRIYA : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to reduce the term of three year course of Film and Television Institute of India:

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Institute is facing financial crunch; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) and (b). The earlier Academic Council of Film & Television Institute of India (FTII), recommended that the duration of the three year courses could be reduced to two years. Consequently, the duration of courses had been reduced to two years from the academic session beginning from January, 1996. On a demand made by the students against this decision, the matter was referred to the Review Committees

constituted by the Academic Council. Based on the recommendations of the Review Committees and the Academic Council, the Governing Council of the Institute has agreed to revert to the three years courses from the next academic session.

(c) and (d). FTII is an Institution almost fully funded by the Central Government. As such, it has also to face the general constraints of funds like any other Government organisation. However, the required grant-in-aid is being made available to the Institute for its smooth functioning.

'Palace on Wheels' Train

3011. SHRI B.L. SHANKAR : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of 'place on wheels' trains running in the country;

(b) whether there is any proposal to introduce such a train in Karnataka;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (d). The following tourist trains are already in operation with public sector participation :-

(i) Palace on Wheels running in collaboration with Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation.

(ii) The Royal Orient running in collaboration with Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Ltd.

In response to a global invitation to bid issued in May, 1994, the Ministry of Railways have awarded contracts to private sector companies for ownership, marketing and management of five tourist trains. The following trains will cover the State of Karnataka :

Circuit

1. Goa (Madgaon)-Mangalore-Mysore (Belur/ Halebid)-Hospet (Hampi)-Bangalore-Goa(Madgaon).
2. Bangalore-Mysore-Madras-Kodaikanal Road-Kanniyakumari-Trivandrum-Cochin-Mettupalayam (Ooty)-Bangalore. (2 trains)

Letters of intent have already been issued to the successful bidders.

Illegal Trade of Copper

3012. SHRI VIJAY GOEL : Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that illegal trade of copper is freely going on specially in Delhi without proper sales documents and valid bills sold at Rs. 15,000/- to Rs. 20,000/- cheaper per tonne than the price fixed by the Hinddustan Copper Limited;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) to (c). Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

IST/STD/PCO in West Bengal

3013. SHRI ANIL BASU : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of ISD/STD/PCO booths in operation in West Bengal, district-wise;

(b) the steps taken to provide more such booths in public places in the State; and

(c) the place selected for providing these booths in the State during the current financial year?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) The information is given in the enclosed statement.

(b) and (c). STD PCOs have been provided at public places. The sites for STD PCOs are not selected in advance. However, more STD PCOs at public places will be allotted by STD PCO allotment committees to eligible applicants having suitable sites.

STATEMENT

S.No.	Name of the District	Number of STD/ISD/PCOs
1	2	3
1.	Burdwan	549
2.	Bankura	43
3.	Purulia	20
4.	Midnapore	88
5.	24 Parganas (North)	39
6.	24 Parganas (South)	13
7.	Howrah	6
8.	Hooghly	37
9.	Murshidabad	64
10.	Birbhum	55
11.	Darjeeling	605
12.	Malda	50
13.	Dinajpur (North)	20
14.	Dinajpur (South)	8